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**Amendments to the Specification**

Please amend the title as follows:

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~~FOLDING RIGID-BOTTOMED BOAT~~  
FOLDING RIGID-BOTTOM BOAT

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Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- [0001]            This application is a continuation-in-part of applicant's prior patent application, serial number 09/537,337, filed March 29, 2000 now U.S. Patent No. 6,367,404. –

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Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 3, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- [0002]            The present invention is the result of the inventor's 30 years of experience with boats, including sailing, designing, and construction, combined with his survival experience in a conventional life raft. Generally, the stability, speed potential, load-carrying capability, and resistance to shipping water from waves and spray increase with a vessel's size. Although the safety, utility, and comfort of small craft therefore increase with size, increasing size creates problems for storage and transport, especially for auxiliary craft that must be carried aboard other boats, land vehicles, or aircraft. Many mariners are forced to carry auxiliary craft far smaller than the ideal because of limitations of onboard storage space. In addition, most mariners need launches (dinghies) for normal commuting between ship and shore, while many of these mariners should also carry

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conventional life rafts or boats for emergencies at sea, yet available space aboard too often makes the carrying of both a dinghy and life raft or life boat difficult if not impossible. The invention, allows mariners to store and/or transport in the same cubic footage a vessel roughly twice the length of a normal rigid boat, which provides roughly six to eight times the in-use volume, allowing mariners to carry significantly larger craft that enhance both routine and emergency capabilities of the craft. Alternatively, mariners may choose to carry twice as many auxiliary craft as they could by using typical rigid craft. The invention also allows boaters of every sort to more easily store or transport a wide variety of folding craft including but not limited to flat-bottomed, chined, round-bottomed, V-d, and stepped displacement and planing hulls to create dinghies, lifeboats, kayaks, canoes, barges, prams, runabouts and a host of other types with enhanced capabilities. As used herein the term "FRB" refers to "folding rigid-bottom boat." –

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Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 8, with the following rewritten paragraph:

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-- [0008] FRB is the only RIB that benefits from the rigidity, strength, and longevity of rigid hinges, like some folding rigid boats, but unlike rigid boats, the fulcrum axis of the hinge element(s) of FRB rests significantly below the uppermost extended topsides, or gunwale, when the boat is in the unfolded use condition, allowing the boat to fold into a much smaller volume as well as length. --

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Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 5, line 23, with the following rewritten paragraph:

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Q5 -- [0013] Therefore, it is an object of the invention to provide a ~~rigid-bottomed~~ rigid -bottom water craft with significantly reduced volume while stored relative to its dimensions when unfolded and ready for use, while simultaneously maintaining enhanced performance characteristics such as speed, tracking, maneuverability, and stability of other ~~rigid-bottomed~~ rigid-bottom craft, whether powered by oar, paddle, sail, engine, kite or other means. --

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Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 21, with the following rewritten paragraph:

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Q6 -- [0019] These and other objects of the present invention are achieved in the preferred embodiments disclosed below by providing a folding, ~~rigid-bottomed~~ rigid-bottom boat for routine or emergency use, the boat including a rigid hull bottom with complementary bow and stern ~~sections~~ elements joined along common, centrally disposed joint edges and a hinge element the hinge-pin axis of which extends from port to starboard along the centrally disposed joint edges and pivotally connecting the bow and stern ~~sections~~ elements together for permitting the bow and stern ~~sections~~ elements to be folded onto themselves into a storage or transport configuration and into an unfolded, deployed or in-use configuration. The boat also includes flexible upwardly extending topsides

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extending around at least the sides and bow of the hull (and may enclose the entire perimeter) for providing additional upwardly extended freeboard during deployment and to further provide rigidity to the hull when the boat is in the deployed mode, while allowing the boat to fold when the uppermost topsides are collapsed. --

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 11, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Q7  
-- [0042] As shown in Figures 1 through 12, the boat 1 features a ~~rigid bottom~~  
rigid-bottom hull 2—i.e.; one composed of fiberglass reinforced plastic or other composite material (aramid or carbon reinforced laminates included), molded or cast PVC (polyvinylchloride) or similar plastic, wood, metal or other relatively stiff material—in order to enhance the water craft's performance while in use. The hull may be V-bottomed, round-bottomed, step-planed or otherwise shaped to be propelled by oars, paddle, sail, engine or other means. --

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 8, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Q8  
--[0046] As shown in Figures 2, 5, 7, and 12, alternatively, the uppermost topsides 9 may be composed of a sheet or multiple sheets of film or fabric 11 supported by a rigid gunwale 12 that is hinged with a hinge 23 in line with the transverse joint 5, the

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Reply to Office Action of 04/24/2003

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hinge and gunwale of which are held in the in-use deployed position with struts or similar

13. --

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Please enter the attached Information Disclosure Statement.